**The Moment Before**

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**Educational Objective:**

Students will demonstrate their understanding of the concept of a high stakes moment before by creating and utilizing a moment before in their performance.

\*\*this lesson was originally created for placement in a monologue unit, but could be used for any performance piece that can utilize a “moment before”\*\*

**Materials needed:**

Performance piece for the students, video examples (URL’s listed in lesson plan)

**Hook: Moment before improv game**

* Pair students up. Have one student think of an action that they would stop doing if someone were to suddenly walk into the room (dancing crazily, singing into a hairbrush, brushing teeth, ect.) and have them begin to act that out. Have the other student “walk in” and begin a dialogue based upon the action.
* Pick a couple of groups to perform these short dialogues with the class.

**Step 1: Discuss reactions**

* Based upon the brief performances, discuss the differing reactions to the situations the students “walked in” on.
* Ask students who participated to share why they reacted the way they did, what actions clued them in to the context of the action, etc.
* Discuss how these reactions could have been different had there been more clear context to the situation.

**Step 2: Introduce moment before**

* Write “moment before” on the board and have students share ideas of what that might be, what it entails, etc.
* Use their ideas plus own input to explain what a moment before is and how it is used.
  + Specifically make sure to include:
    - What a *moment before* is: a way to transition into the performance piece, use for a way to connect with a partner, define what the actor was doing, thinking, and feeling right before the scene started.
  + How it is used: used to draw actor and audience into the monologue, helps to define relationships and background within the context of the monologue.

**Step 3: Video Clip examples**

* Show the following examples and discuss what may have been the moment before, or what caused the scene to take off.
  + <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3dmvnocwBpM> *Tangled*: Start at 0:17 and play it through the end. (If time will permit, could actually go back after discussion and watch the real moment before)
  + <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qnmSzD6x4tc> *Hunger Games*: Start at 0:29 and play through until 1:26. (could also go back and watch the real moment before)
  + <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PNAc6zG1ve4> *Extremely Loud and Incredible Close*: Start at 1:50 and play through 3:10.
  + <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o8XtncQy2i8> *Cyberbully*: start at 3:29 to 4:30 (could also go back and watch the real moment before)

**Step 4: Introduce the concept of a high stakes moment before**

* Write on the board some ideas of what high stakes means.
* Have students reflect on the video clips and discuss what the high stakes were, and how they affected the way that the scene played out.

**Step 5: Analyze the performance pieces to create a moment before**

* Present an example of how to look at the text to decipher what could be used as a moment before. (something that you have on hand – could be put on a PowerPoint or handout for the students to read and analyze alongside you)
* Have students look at their own monologues that they chose and analyze the context of the monologue.
* Have them create a moment before using their own ideas, a line before the piece starts, etc. (If time allows have them perform for a partner and have the partner give feedback)

**Step 6: Practice using the moment before**

* Again have students pair up or even put them into groups and have them physically act out the moment before, to help flesh out their ideas and solidify the concept.
* Bring the class back together to discuss the results, what they saw, if it worked, what could be improved on, suggestions, etc.
* Also specifically make sure to discuss how creating a moment before helps the students personally in their own acting? Why is it necessary?

**Step 7: Discuss using a moment before without physically moving**

* Discuss and help the students understand how they can work with or envision the partner they are talking to, and envision what had just happened before they start their piece.
* (This can lead into another lesson on working with an “invisible other” for a monologue)

**Assessment:**

Students will be assessed by their participation throughout the class period, and receive participation points based upon the work that they do during the class.